

same thing to myself and the five others that traveled there. They said, Don't forget about us when we come back home.

With the passage of the new GI Bill, we can make good on that promise that we all made to those troops on our visits there. I hope that Senator McCain and many of our friends here in this hall who have not supported this new GI Bill, who have not supported extending benefits to the troops as they return, to give them an education for a lifetime, will remember that you can't just go there and tell them that you support them, you have to come to this floor and to the floor down the hall and do it.

NEW EMPLOYEE VERIFICATION ACT

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this year I introduced the New Employee Verification Act, H.R. 5515, that prevents unauthorized employment. It will replace the expiring pilot program, E-Verify, that is run by the Department of Homeland Security.

The Department of Homeland Security has no business keeping tabs on work records of law-abiding American citizens. I strongly reject the Orwellian premise that a government agency tasked with catching terrorists should also maintain a huge database on the work history of every single American. Our bipartisan bill ensures that U.S. citizens go through Social Security to confirm their legal right to work, and noncitizens go through the Department of Homeland Security.

I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 5515, to create a new work authorization system that will help reduce illegal immigration, preserve the rights and privacy of law-abiding citizens, and protect Social Security.

HOUSE DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO WORK TO PASS LEGISLATION THAT WILL MAKE REAL DIFFERENCE

(Ms. WATSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, over the last month this Democratic Congress has passed important legislation that will help our economy, our veterans, and millions of middle class families. But our efforts are being opposed by a Bush White House that refuses to work with us to solve our Nation's most pressing problems.

We can't turn around our economy without addressing the escalating housing crisis. Last month, we passed a comprehensive package that addresses the crisis directly, helps stabilize the housing market, and makes a real difference for families at risk for losing their homes.

To help jump-start our economy and help reduce prices at the gas pump, we passed legislation that extends vital tax relief to millions of families, strengthens investment opportunities for American businesses, and encourages the production and use of renewable energy. To help veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we passed a new GI Bill that restores promised 4-year scholarships so they can go to college after they complete their military service.

Mr. Speaker, we are passing legislation here in the House that can make a real difference for all Americans.

PROTECT AMERICA TODAY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it has been 109 days since the Protect America Act expired and our intelligence community's ability to track our enemies was degraded. Foreign surveillance is an important part of our Nation's defense in the global war on terrorism. We need to make sure it's up-to-date and equipped with tools our military and intelligence community say are vital to doing the job.

When the Protect America Act expired, a bipartisan group of Senators passed a bill that enjoys vocal support from House Republicans and Democrats, 25 State attorneys general, including South Carolina's own Henry McMaster, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Unfortunately, none of that seems to matter to the majority leadership, who has tried to downplay the importance of this bill and has failed to bring it to the House floor for consideration. We must not tie the hands of our intelligence services while they are doing all they can to protect American families.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

PROUD TO BE A DEMOCRAT

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. This past week has seen the end of the Democratic primary. I think it will end on Saturday. Mr. Speaker, I have been proud to be a Democrat and witness this historic election. When our country was founded, African Americans were slaves, and even after slavery ended in 1865, Jim Crow laws and others passed by this Congress and States didn't allow African Americans full privileges until about the 1960s. Women weren't allowed to vote in this country until an amendment was passed in 1920, passed by my State of Tennessee, the final State, the Perfect 36.

To see a great candidate who happens to be an African American and a great

candidate who's a woman wage a tremendous campaign for the Democratic nomination shows how far this country has come toward truly forming a more perfect union. I am more proud than ever to be a Democrat, to be a Member of this House of Representatives.

As I look back on the anniversary of the assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy, I know that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans and we will see it move to victory in November, and a new generation of thought.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE WORK OF CHIEF DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL MICHAEL BLEVINS

(Mr. BOOZMAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BOOZMAN. I rise in recognition of the success and achievements in the career of Chief Deputy U.S. Marshal Mike Blevins. Mike has served the U.S. Marshal Service since 1979. His duties have taken him all across the country, with long terms in Arkansas and Texas. Since 1989, he has been the Chief Deputy of the Western District of Arkansas. During that time, he also served as the Acting Marshal for more than 2 years.

Since he has been in Arkansas, he has helped supervise numerous programs that have resulted in a record number of fugitive arrests. His hard work has earned him several awards, including the United States Marshal Service Distinguished Service Award in 2006.

I have had the privilege to work with Mike on many different projects; most recently, a successful effort to make Fort Smith, Arkansas, the home of the National U.S. Marshals Museum.

His dedication, persistence, and leadership are all admirable qualities. I appreciate his friendship and example. I am honored to have had the opportunity to have worked with such a great man, and thank him for his service to our country.

DEMOCRATS TAKE ACTION ON RECORD HIGH GAS PRICES AT THE PUMP

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, from day one, this Democratic Congress has been fighting to reduce our dependence on foreign oil, bring down record gas prices, and launch a cleaner and smarter energy program. We have passed legislation to suspend the filling of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve later this month through the end of this year. After initially opposing this legislation, the President signed it into law last month.

We passed legislation that gives the U.S. the authority to prosecute anti-competitive conduct committed by the